



Indiana
Department
of
Health

Chronicle of Indiana Cancer Control

Spotlight

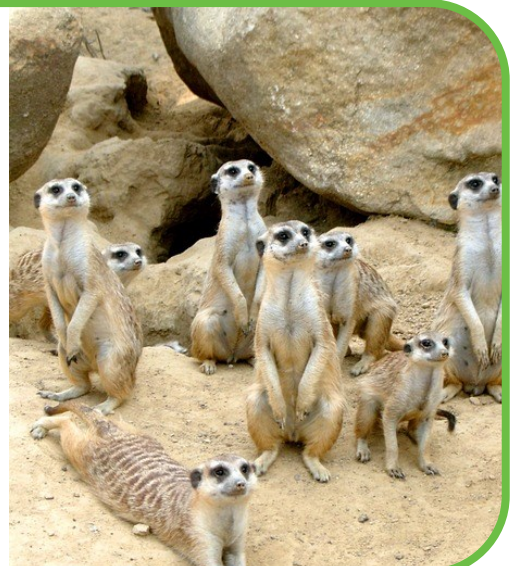
December— Family History and Cancer

Knowing your family's cancer history can help you assess your risk of getting certain cancers. The holidays offer a good time to ask your family about its cancer past. At family gatherings, respectfully ask your relatives to help fill in the gaps and confirm what you remember.

You should discuss this knowledge with your health care provider. They may recommend certain testing or screenings that might be necessary.

Remember: not all cancer types are inherited. In fact, most people diagnosed with cancer don't have a family history of the disease. Only about 5 to 10 percent of all cancer cases are inherited.¹

1. <https://www.cancer.org/latest-news/how-family-history-really-affects-your-cancer-risk.html>



Cancer Risks

If you have a family history of breast, ovarian, uterine, or colorectal cancer, you may have a higher risk for these types of cancers. Tell your doctor if...

- Any first-degree relative (parent, sibling, or child) was diagnosed with ovarian, uterine, breast, or colorectal cancer before age 50
- Two or more other relatives (grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, or nephews) on either your mother's or father's side had ovarian, uterine, breast, or colorectal cancer
- A male relative had breast cancer
- You have an Eastern European or Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry

Telling your doctor about your family health history is a first step to find out if you may have a higher cancer risk. It will help you and your doctor decide what tests you need, when to start, and how often to be tested.

Knowing your family health history also helps you and your doctor decide if genetic counseling or testing may be right for you.²

2. <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/family-health-history/index.htm>

Resources

Information needed²



Gather information about yourself as well as your:

- Parents and grandparents
- Siblings
- Children
- Aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews

Information should include:

- Who had cancer and what kind?
- How old were they when they were diagnosed?
- Are they still living? If not, at what age did they die and what caused their death?

What Is genetic counseling and testing?

If your family health history suggests that you may carry a genetic mutation, your doctor can refer you to genetic counseling.

A genetic counselor is a specialist who asks you about your family's health history and helps you decide if genetic testing is right for you. A genetic test uses your saliva or blood to look at your DNA. This can show if you have mutations (changes) that may raise your cancer risk.²

What should I do if I have a genetic mutation?

Having a genetic mutation does not mean you will get cancer. You can do things to lower or manage your cancer risk. Talk to your doctor about:

- Tests. You may need to start getting screening tests earlier and get tested more often than other people.
- Medicine or surgery that could lower your cancer risk
- Making healthy choices like quitting smoking, not drinking alcohol, exercising regularly, and maintaining a healthy weight.²

Facts and Figures

The burden of cancer in



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The Indiana Cancer Consortium (ICC) has issued the sixth edition of its report on the burden of cancer in Indiana, Indiana Cancer Facts and Figures.

This report is created to cover current cancer topics, issues, and trends. The document reviews cancer incidence, mortality, and survival statistics as well as cancer symptoms.

Included are risk factors related to cancer development and information about early detection, treatment, and survivorship.

This report provides information to inform decision making, support program goals, and increase education around cancer risks and guidelines.

Go to www.indianacancer.org to view the report.

Indiana Cancer Control Plan 2021-2022

Developed by the ICC and diverse partners from across the state, the Indiana Cancer Control Plan 2021-2022 is a comprehensive roadmap for actions that will guide cancer control efforts and promote collaboration between organizations and the citizens of Indiana.

Go to www.indianacancer.org to view the plan.

To **promote**, **protect**, and **improve** the health and safety of all Hoosiers

Indiana Department of Health

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